

# The GREGORIAN REVIEW



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# The GREGORIAN REVIEW

Studies in Sacred Chant and Liturgy

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Bulletin of the School of Solesmes

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## CONTENTS

Timeliness of the Motu Proprio.....	3
by Dom Jean Claire	
Pope Pius X and Gregorian Chant.....	16
by Dom Leon Robert	
Kyrie IX.....	24
by Dom Joseph Gajard	
Sanctus IX.....	36
by Sister Leonie de Jesus	
Notes on Gregorian Technique and Style.....	41
by J. Robert Carroll	
The Boston Affiliation of the Gregorian Institute.....	49

## TIMELINESS OF THE MOTU PROPRIO

by Dom Jean Claire

We published in Vol. I, No. 2 of the *Gregorian Review* (March-April, 1954), the translation of the letter which the Holy Father has addressed through his Prosecretary of State to the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Studies, Seminaries and Universities on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the *Motu Proprio* of St. Pius X. With this document the Sovereign Pontiff explicitly intended to commemorate the *Motu Proprio* of 1903 as well as the Apostolic Constitution *Divini Cultus* by which Pius XI had, twenty-five years later, in 1928, confirmed the dispositions taken by his Saintly Predecessor in enriching them with opportune precisions.

Confirmation and enrichment: Such are, even today, the conclusions which spring from the mere reading of the new document. Confirmation of principles, enrichment of the practical purview which should apply them to daily reality.

After having read the letter addressed to him before an international public of church musicians convened on last November 22 at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, His Eminence Cardinal Pizzardo expressed the wish that the pontifical ideas should be broadly diffused and treated in commentary throughout the Catholic world. We respond as much more readily to this desire as certain—with whom we do not side—will perhaps have found the letter of Msgr. Montini somewhat succinct and laconic on the subjects which interested them the most. They would have wished for more precise answers to the problems which their pastoral zeal

poses, directives more adapted to the new exigencies which are not, in their eyes, those of fifty years ago, more explicit indications to orient their liturgical and musical activity. The Pope, they will say, wants the people to sing in Church, but is this to be in Latin or in the vernacular? . . . that the *Pueri Cantores* multiply, but to sing Gregorian chant or polyphony? . . . that seminarians take part in the major ceremonies of the cathedral, but to give more luster to the canonical office or to match it with paraliturgical celebrations more accessible to the general public?

All these questions seem to us to have precisely their very clear answer in a short phrase of the letter which we reproduce in Italian before translating it to our best English version:

“E, invero, tuttora viva, anzi, in un certo senso aumentata, la rispondenza del documento alle odierne esigenze . . .”

In truth, this document corresponds yet as fully, and in a certain sense even more fully, to the present exigencies”<sup>1</sup>.

Such is the judgment, authorized as it is, which the Holy See has made of the needs of the present time in regard to sacred music. That is to say quite clearly that the solution of all the problems, whether of pastoral nature, esthetic or technical nature, are found in the loyal and integral application of the norms edicted by St. Pius X, from which, after fifty years, one may find nothing to take away, to which there is nothing to add. Also we are pleased, for our part, with the wholly Roman sobriety of certain passages of the above cited letter: Saint Pius X has, in his *Motu Proprio*, defined the true notion of sacred music in terms of such accuracy and measure that his Successors have not had to retouch them. One could not speak on Gregorian chant better than he, nor on classic polyphony, nor on the relationship which

1. The literal Italian is difficult to express in English because of its inverted structure, but this does not reduce its validity.



must obligatorily link modern compositions to these two approved types. Besides, is not the multiplication of legislative texts often a mark of weakness? When the law is well conceived and well stated, it suffices that authority watch that it be applied in calling attention when need be to infractions. That is what was done in 1938; it is again what has just been done in 1953.

There is nothing astonishing, moreover, in this permanent timeliness of the *Motu Proprio*; although forming a "Judicial Code of Sacred Music," it is not a detailed collection of injunctions and interdictions. No doubt it admits of a certain number of express condemnations, directed firstly against the abuses in vogue at the moment of its promulgation, but it aims above all to form a "spirit," a mentality of a church musician, in reestablishing a strict hierarchy among the diverse types of sacred music. It is to this hierarchy of religious and esthetic, intimately linked to the sung prayer of the Church, that we must return to soundly answer to the questions previously asked.

### Latin or Vernacular?

Gregorian chant being placed clearly above all other types, being declared *necessary* in certain parts of the liturgy, and *sufficient* for all the needs of the Catholic cult, earnestly recommended not only to trained Scholae but even to the people in the parts of the office which fall to them, the question of language is by this point itself solved. The polyphony of the Renaissance being for its part highly approved, here are two types of music indissolubly bound to the use of Latin which benefits in the *Motu Proprio* from an official consecration. Nothing more remained but to declare the Latin language exclusive for the solemn liturgy; that is found unmistakably in the *Motu Proprio*, which "corresponds yet as fully, and in a certain sense even more fully, to the present exigencies." And even were not Latin the language of unity and the evidence of the note of catholicity in the midst of the nations, it is permissible to think that the Gregorian and classic repertoires, in which the Church recognizes, besides

its artistic value, a specifically religious value, would suffice to preserve it from the abandon that certain persons promise it. The advantages, rather problematic, of liturgical chants in the vernacular would surely not compensate for the loss of these treasures of spirituality authentically Catholic.

To wish in return that in the properly catechetical readings of the Mass or of the Office, in the questions or dialogues which form part of the administration of certain sacraments, the vernacular be used, in order to be directly understood by the people, is quite another question. There is much less in this to be lost than to be gained. This said without passing over it, nor wishing to involve our readers in the illusion of an immediate and total renovation of Christian spirit among the faithful, thanks to biblical readings in a vernacular which too often must be translated again . . .

No doubt, maintaining Latin as language of liturgical prayer raises difficulties which it is useless to deny. But there again the true solutions are not solutions of facility. Experience proves it. All music teachers know that children have no trouble in learning and retaining the sense of the usual words of Catholic prayer, whether they are in Latin, Greek or Hebrew: *Et cum spiritu tuo*, *Kyrie eleison*, Amen, *Alleluia*, etc. Yet must one take the trouble to explain them to the children! On the other hand, one can cite, among other really troublesome cases, that such as the junior seminary where the *Benedicite* is recited traditionally in Latin, a language that all the students learn in class without it ever coming to the thought of anyone to check on whether they applied to the liturgical texts their knowledge of classical Latin. The day when praiseworthy "pastoral care" strove to "do something" in this domain, it was decided henceforth to recite the *Benedicite* and the Graces in the vernacular. It is not sure that the majority of the students were more interested in it.

In decreeing energetic measures for liturgical and musical training of the clergy, the Congregation of Studies are thus taking the right route to resolve the greatest "pastoral difficulties" which are constantly opposed to the *Motu Proprio*.



## Gregorian Chant or Polyphony?

It is not a question of exclusivity, but as we have said, of hierarchy. If in monastic churches nothing but Gregorian chant is heard, it is perhaps that the monks wish to defer to an ancient family tradition and preciously keep to the usages of a time when no other music was known, but it is above all by concern to hold themselves in everything to the most perfect rule which is the law of their profession. Among them the exclusive fidelity to Gregorian chant is the pendant in the liturgical domain of the observance of the evangelical counsels, above and beyond the precepts imposed on all. The Church, which, without obliging anyone to embrace the perfect life, asks all its children to value it, to recognize its superiority over the common life of Christians in the world, asks, does she not, nearly the same things in favor of Gregorian chant when she, by the voice of St. Pius X, sets forth this axiom by which many choirmasters could make their examination of conscience: "Let each one be assured that a ceremony loses nothing of its solemnity when it is accompanied by no other music than this." To Gregorian chant thus, is the primacy of esteem due in the mentality of the church musician such as the *Motu Proprio* describes it, and this will aid us in determining the place reserved to classic polyphony beside the traditional monody.

In his *Motu Proprio*, St. Pius X does not speak as an art critic (he was one, however!), but as a Pastor; he desires that the music which is heard in church should not detract the faithful from prayer, but rather that it aid them in praying, better, that it pray with them. He also wants the Christian populace to participate effectively through the chant in the solemn liturgy. These two principles guide his choice and inspire him to give Gregorian chant without equal. Indeed, only Gregorian chant entirely realizes the two pastoral aims envisaged; far from hindering prayer, it forms a unit with it, it is the prayer itself of the Church in its most

traditional form, the most authentic one; and on the other hand, it is uniquely by Gregorian chant that the people, the mass of the faithful, may participate vocally in the liturgical ceremonies.<sup>1</sup>

Let us be clearly understood. The people can also sing figured hymns, but this is not then strictly the liturgy. The people are incapable of singing the ornate pieces of the Proper (Introits, Graduals, Offertories, etc.), but that is not what is asked of them; such has never been their role in the liturgical drama in which each, Celebrant, ministers, schola and people has his part to take, each different from that of the others. We have seen the birth in our day of a new theory of the active participation of the Christian people in the holy mysteries, a theory unknown in the centuries of faith and in disaccord with that which St. Pius X, making himself the echo of the whole tradition of the Church, has recalled in his *Motu Proprio*. Today it would seem necessary, we are told, that the whole congregation sing the entire Proper and the entire Ordinary of the mass! And since this is unrealisable in the present state of the liturgical repertoire contained in the Vatican edition, we must at all cost rediscover the melodies, doubtless simple and syllabic, which served as theme to the embellishments of the Golden Age of the Gregorian Era to the great joy of the esthetes and the great detriment of the Christian people! If we cannot lay a hand on the manuscripts which contained them (and for good reason!), nothing remains but to simplify the present chant, to reduce the ornate melodies to their primitive "skeleton"! This was, it appears, proposed at the International Congress of Sacred Music of Rome in 1950. It would be hard to see the musicians of the whole world approving the project of a new Medicean edition! In any case, there would be no better way

1. We distinguish: *vocal* participation, effective, in sacred chant, and silent participation, *auditive*, affective. When we affirm that the ornate pieces of Gregorian chant and polyphony are not "popular," we do not mean to say that the people are incapable of appreciating them, of profiting from them and of participating in them (in the second sense). But the experience of the broadcast masses and the heavy mail which they provoke proves that monody, even very ornate, is very accessible to the average public and that a certain musical culture is needed to "pray" in a moderately complex polyphony.



to give the understanding that the work of St. Pius X ("more timely than ever") is in vain, and that everything is to be taken over again on more "pastoral" bases.

One fact imposes itself, on the contrary, to those who do not let themselves be carried away by their imaginations and who have spent some time with liturgical history and Gregorian paleography: No matter how far back in the manuscript tradition one goes (outside of which there is nothing but open hypothesis), the pieces of the Proper are of the ornate or semi-ornate style which we know. If even one holds, to go back over the course of centuries, to pass by the truncated editions which have held sway up to the Vatican, it must be said that for the Proper, the most ancient sources are the most ornate. On the contrary, and this is remarkable, for the pieces of the Ordinary (our Kyriale), the oldest sources are the simplest. When the Vatican gives double versions (*Asperges* I and III; *Kyrie* IX and X; X and XI *ad lib.*; XVII and XI *ad lib.*) it is always the least ornate which is the oldest. The long vocalises only come later, and the study of sources would no doubt show that they are neither popular in origin nor in intended use. What should one conclude if not that the true popular repertoire, the only possible, the only needed, is, together with the responses to the Celebrant, the Kyriale, beginning with its simplest part: *Kyrie* XVI, Mass XVIII, etc. Why must it be that after fifty years one should be given as a type of easy and popular Gregorian chant the too famous "Mass of the Angels," which is in reality neither very Gregorian (*Kyrie, Gloria*), nor very easy (*Sanctus, Agnus*). The most curious thing is that by dint of repeating it, it has come about that it has been made popular. It is sung today, indifferently well, in all parishes, as well as *Asperges* I which is far from being the easiest. Now whoever can sing the most difficult can sing the less difficult; thus there is no reason to lose hope for the future of popular Gregorian chant.

As for the ornate pieces of the Propers, they are traditionally reserved for a trained schola, and there is no reason to be scandalized about it. It is in the very nature of music

to produce its effect not only in the souls of the performers, but even in those of mere auditors. This is seen in daily experience, and fortunately it is not necessary to know how to sing or play a musical work in order to appreciate it. The Church, which knows the power of enchantment of music and which understands how to utilize it for supernatural ends, has desired that a notable part of its official and public prayer be clothed in melodies and thus proposed for the audition of the faithful. In doing this she recognized that she does not have to teach and govern pure spirits, but natures with both intelligence and feeling to whom it is fitting to present a prayer susceptible of introducing itself to the intelligence by its doctrinal content, and to the sensibilities by its artistic form.

Here we cite only one example. It is not new, but it has the merit of having a bearing on a gradual, one of those chants of meditation which, to listen to some persons, serves absolutely no purpose, interrupts the action and unduly lengthens the ceremony. Each of us can read in the Bible this sentence of St. Paul: "Christ rendered himself obedient unto death, yea unto death on the cross." The meaning of this text is clear; there must be, however, a great deal more for a simple reading to make us appreciate its full profundity. What should be done? There are two methods, as has been said somewhat shrewdly: retire to the desert, meditate day and night in silence, mortification, prayer, waiting for grace to come to enlighten us, or the second method: go into a church while the choir sings the gradual of Holy Thursday; the Gregorian melody which so magnificently weds itself to the contours of the text and comments marvelously on its sense will penetrate our "psychology," as our contemporaries say, and, to the measure of grace, there will also be a vital and complete assimilation of the inspired text.

It can be seen how this simple audition of ornate pieces can become, when favorable conditions of preparation and intelligence are realized, active participation of the whole Christian assembly considered in its organic unity, with its differentiated and ranked functions.



It is simple, in the light of these reflections, to assign its place to polyphony. Polyphonic singing, classic or modern, not being a popular type (everyone is in agreement on that point), is consequently reserved for a schola of specialists, exactly as the ornate pieces of Gregorian chant. This established, do we not immediately see the solution to apply to the conflict which "Gregorianists" and "polyphonists" sometimes raise? This solution rests quite simply in the respect of the mutual roles of the people and schola such as they spring from the dispositions of the *Motu Proprio*: to the people, the responses to the Celebrant, and the Ordinary of the Mass, according to its means; to the schola, the chant of the Proper and the alternation with the people for the *Kyriale*. At the time that Pius X was writing, the people were practically mute, and it was necessary to "give back to them the use of Gregorian chant." Today there is no lack of churches in which the nave, often "seeded" with better trained or more convinced elements, is beginning to be able to take its effective part in the celebration of the parochial mass. From such a point it would be a veritable *abuse* for the schola, under pretext of singing an Ordinary in polyphony (or even in too ornate Gregorian chant), to reduce the people to silence and take away from them their part. We must face reality clearly: to the extent that the people regain the use of Gregorian chant and become capable of effectively playing the proper role which falls to them by right, the polyphonic ordinary, even that most in conformity with the *Motu Proprio*, must be eliminated. Let us not speak of the responses to the Celebrant executed in faux-bourbons by the schola without the people being able to join in it. It is too often a proving point of accuracy; always it is defiance of the liturgical spirit.

According to the *Motu Proprio*, whose timeliness shines once more in the eyes of all, the true right of the people in regard to active participation in the liturgy is thus the following: to provide the part which belongs to them, and for the rest to be carried to a pious and enjoying understanding of the texts by the chant of the schola. It is the right which must be given back to them, if it has not already been re-

gained, or which must be preserved for them if it has already been regained by them.

Those, then, who have believed to read in the *Motu Proprio* that classic polyphony was quite as liturgical and, by that, just as much recommended as Gregorian chant, have read somewhat quickly and have not entered sufficiently into the pontifical thought. Gregorian chant should have not only the primacy of esteem in the mind of the choirmaster, but even the primacy of fact wherever there is a "people" (this is not the case at the Sistine Chapel, nor in many communities) and wherever they are capable of singing. Progressively the polyphonic ordinary will disappear in the face of the Gregorian ordinary. That is already an accomplished fact in those churches where the liturgical movement is solidly implanted: at St. Francois-Xavier, for example, one could hear for the last ten years the ordinary sung in Gregorian chant by the nave, and some pieces of the Proper, the Offertory or the Communion, in polyphony by the choir. In fact, it must not be forgotten that the composers of the Renaissance treated the pieces of the Proper even before those of the Ordinary; thus it will be lawful for polyphony to regain the lost ground in the program of the Mass, to which we limit ourselves, at the cost of a modification of the usual repertoires.

Such is the timely solution which the *Motu Proprio* indicates to those who feel that there will be for them a decision to make in the near future. We do not misunderstand for all that the perplexities which can assail a choirmaster of a cathedral during the critical period in which the changeover of which we have just shown the necessity is taking place; that will not be done in a day, and the chant of the congregation will appear miserable beside the splendors of Palestrinian polyphony! A great deal of confidence, work and perseverance is necessary . . . but we do not believe that a priest in charge of the chant in a parish can in all sureness of conscience neglect the liturgical and musical education of the congregation in order to restrict himself to only the training of a schola, even though celebrated. His priestly role is not



limited to ensuring for the generality of the parishioners offices worthily sung by a small number from among them (who are no doubt the delegates of the whole parochial community); he has first of all the duty of organizing the active participation of the whole assembly in bringing each to the point of executing as best possible the part which belongs to him. It is in this that we recognize the intentions, *pastoral before all else*, of the *Motu Proprio*.

### Canonical office or paraliturgy?

It is a secret to no one that since the last war a powerful movement is in force to put into practice a *liturgy of fact* destined, the day it will have proved itself, to become the *liturgy of law*, thanks to I know not what “*sanatio in radice*” of which we find no example in the long history of the Catholic liturgy. The encyclical *Mediator*, in reaction against the multiplication of these “experiments” which are cloaked all under the most pious pretexts, has recalled that the Holy See reserves to itself all initiative in liturgical matters. Since then the reform of the Easter Vigil (let us hope that this is only the first step) has shown how and in what sense the Holy See intends to exercise this right. The “experiments” have nonetheless continued! When one has rejected Latin and hence all Gregorian chant with most of the polyphonic repertoire, ancient and modern, why not make innovations also in the arrangement of the offices? The paraliturgy which was supposed to initiate gradually, in principal, non-Christians to the mysteries which the Catholic liturgy honors, has ended by taking, in some places, the place of the official liturgy! To the profit of the paraliturgy is organized a desertion of the solemn liturgy and of public prayer. The parochial high mass is no longer the ideal of community liturgy which one is given as the goal to realize in perfection, to which one strives to come, by stages if necessary, singing on psalm tones that which one cannot yet arrive at singing for lack of training. For it is substituted a low mass during which there is much freedom, and one tries to show that this is much more liturgical! On Sunday evening, no more Ves-

pers, no more Compline, but a "celebration," that is, a ceremony in which it is lawful for each one to add anything he wishes without having to account for it to anyone.

All that is only the reflection in the liturgical domain of unfortunate deviations which are more profound. We readily see in it the manifestation of that tendency towards protestantism which the Cardinal Archbishop of Toulouse has just denounced and which arises from losing sight of the true notion of what the Church is: *Sancta Mater Ecclesia*. . . It is very exactly that of the *liturgical free examination*.

Is there nothing more sad that seeing treasures of zeal (for these intentions are above all suspicion) spend themselves thus outside the path which the Church has taken the trouble to outline—and how very clearly!—in the most solemn of documents. We cannot help but think of the case of the monk spending himself in mortifications which the Abbot has not approved: *Praesumptioni deputabitur*, St. Benedict says to him, *et vanae gloriae, non mercedi*.<sup>1</sup>

But after all, it will be said to us, is there not "something to be done?" Has not the liturgy in some parishes become a petrified ritualism? The *Motu Proprio* had already given the cry of alarm regarding this state of affairs fifty years before many dreamed of becoming upset by it; but at the same time it indicated the direction in which work had to be done to guard against this: the bringing back of the faithful to the true source of Christian spirit which is *active participation in the holy mysteries* and to the *public and solemn prayer* of the Church, giving back to them the use of Gregorian chant. For an "experiment" to try, the *Motu Proprio* proposes one which is not without guarantees. This is not the experiment of this one or of that one, but rather the "experiment of Pius X," the experiment of the Church! Pius XII has recently, after Pius XI, restated for us that it is always valid, always approved, always blessed . . . that should be enough . . .

1. "That will be accounted for as presumption and vain glory and will go without recompense." Rule of St. Benedict, chap. 49.



And yet, instead of turning to profit the graces of that benediction which Pius XII grants at the end of the letter to "all who submit themselves" to the norms of the *Motu Proprio*, certain persons dream of a revolution in the liturgy and in sacred music. No doubt they have not well considered the scope of what St. Pius X realized fifty years ago. At that time the true Gregorian chant was practically non-existent; it was heard only in a few monasteries and the books which were due to make it known were yet to be edited. The masterpieces of classical art, so prized today, had almost everywhere given way to operatic music, if not the operetta. Nevertheless the holy Pope did not hesitate. He knew the spiritual dangers which this poverty of sacred music caused to pass through the Christian populace. He had measured the difficulties which he would meet in desiring to remedy this. As a Shepherd only caring for the good of his flock, he made the move which only a small group of elite wished for, a gesture of wholly apostolic audacity and firmness, thus making a revolution of an amplitude and boldness such as it would be difficult to think that the Church would wish to make in a similar fashion every fifty years.

## POPE PIUS X AND GREGORIAN CHANT

by Dom Leon Robert

Of all the reforms effected by St. Pius X, the restoration of Gregorian Chant is one of the best known. He is the Pope of the *Motu Proprio* of 1903, a document which Msgr. Montini, in a recent letter, called by way of abbreviation "the *Motu Proprio* on Gregorian chant".<sup>1</sup> What is less well known is the fact that this reform had been close to his heart for a long time. One can state that from his childhood he intuitively felt the exceptional importance of Gregorian chant in the liturgical solemnities, and that he very quickly became aware of its artistic value, of its nature as community chant and most of all of its virtue as prayer, for, as nothing else can, it brings into relief the liturgical formulas and the sacrifice of the Mass itself. One might wish to show by means of texts the continuity of thought of the Saint on this subject; unfortunately those writings anterior to his pontificate have been preserved only in small numbers. Yet one can fill in where they are lacking by calling on the biographers of Pius X, who have rescued from oblivion many facts which leave no room for doubt regarding the constant thought of the Pope.

From his early youth, reports Msgr. Bressan, "when he was junior server in his parish he occupied himself a great deal with the catechisms and with sacred chant, and he took part in the "little singers": *cantores fanciulli*".<sup>2</sup> Enrolled at the major seminary of Padua, he had the joy to discover a class in Gregorian chant established there. It was Msgr.

1. *Gregorian Review*, 1954, No. 2, (March-April), p. 47

2. *Fernessole*, I, p. 19

Barbarigo, the founder of the seminary himself in 1671, who organized these courses in sacred chant and ruled that all the seminarians follow them.<sup>1</sup> Don Sarto showed himself to be one of the most assiduous in this matter and, says Father Dal-Gal<sup>2</sup>, his superiors, knowing his "passion for music", gave to him during his last year of theology the directing of the chant of the seminarians. From that point he was initiated to the role of choirmaster and was able to organize scholae.

And indeed, as early as his first post in the parochial ministry as vicar at Tombolo, he hastened to organize a chant choir. This was not enough for him, however. From that moment he understood that the ideal would be for all the faithful to take part in the mass. His inexperience, however, led him to attempt, according to the report of Rene Bazin, a rather singular compromise. He undertook to have them sing in faux-bourdon — at least that is what we are given to understand by an overly laconic phrase of the biographer.<sup>3</sup> This attempt was not made again. Don Sarto understood that something better could be done to realize an ideal which he conceived from the artist's viewpoint as well as that of the priest. It was in full knowledge of the matter that he was thenceforth to give preference in every aspect to Gregorian chant over all other religious music, and M. Ledre is correct in writing: "He already knows, well before Venice and well before Rome, which sort of music is suited to the Christian ceremonies."<sup>4</sup> Finally, in order to succeed more quickly in achieving a good execution of the chant of the Mass, he organized a school of Gregorian chant at Tombolo.<sup>5</sup>

Named pastor of Salzano, he did the same thing, and he neglected nothing to "initiate children and adults to the beauty of Gregorian chant"<sup>6</sup>, and he founded a choir. In the

1. *Bazin*, p. 27

2. *Dal-Gal.*, p. 15

3. *Bazin*, p. 33

4. *Ledre*, p. 30

5. *Dal-Gal.*, p. 22

6. *Dal-Gal.*, p. 39



life of the Saint published by the postulation, Father Pierami remarks that he "obtained in this way, to further elevate the ceremonies, already splendid in themselves, chants executed to perfection: the clergy and the people were amazed".<sup>1</sup> As early as this moment, proof was given that the official chant of the Church was a real chant of the people. No doubt the Gregorian melodies were often disfigured, corrupted, and it was fitting to give them back their original form. The pastor of Salzano knew this, and from this time he took a lively interest in the work inaugurated by Dom Gueranger and pursued by the monks of Solesmes toward the restoration of Gregorian chant. After becoming canon of Treviso, chancellor of the Bishop and spiritual director of the major seminary, he pursued his studies in sacred music, and in 1882 he was present at the Congress of Arezzo, which, as is known, was a triumph for Dom Pothier and the school of Solesmes.<sup>2</sup>

In 1885 he was named Bishop of Mantua. He immediately showed himself to be in possession of a precise program which he put into application without delay. He had found a seminary in full decadence. He reorganized it in the very first year of his episcopacy, and to give evidence of the interest which he bore for it, he took it on himself, in spite of his many occupations, the teaching of two subjects whose relationship is of greatest significance; theology and sacred chant.<sup>3</sup> In theology it was a return to St. Thomas, in sacred music, a return to Gregorian chant. One of his first biographers, Dr. Luigi Daelli reports<sup>4</sup> that he himself formed the schola of the seminary, that he taught solfege and composed the regulations of the courses in chant. Yet more, he deemed the time well-spent which he passed in copying out the music in his own hand when there were no books.<sup>5</sup> And Dr. Daelli adds: His rule for the school of chant and the first masses sung at the cathedral, written in the very hand of Bishop Sarto, are preserved as a treasure at the seminary of Mantua''!

1. *Revue Gregorienne*, 1951, p. 143

2. *Revue Gregorienne*, 1951, p. 143

3. *Dal-Gal.*, p. 79

4. *Fernessole*, I, p. 77 (cf. p. 37, note 18)

5. *Revue Gregorienne*, 1951, p. 144

This was not enough. It was also necessary to instruct all the clergy and faithful of the diocese. A double effort was required: to ban profane music from the churches and to substitute Gregorian chant for it.<sup>1</sup> It was at the synod of 1888 (the first held at Mantua since 1679!) that Bishop Sarto undertook this double reform with a precision and firmness which manifested that there was no indecision, no doubt in the thought of the prelate on this subject.<sup>2</sup> The dispositions taken by the synod were to be restated at Venice in 1895 and at Rome in 1903. Another very significant fact: it was at Mantua that the future Pius X discovered the remarkable musician that Don Lorenzo Perosi was to be<sup>3</sup>: from this moment he encouraged Perosi to devote himself to religious music, and clearly oriented this artist of great value toward polyphonic music. But was this to the detriment of Gregorian chant? Not all. Not only was Gregorian chant to maintain its primary position, but polyphonic singing was not to be admitted to support the former in the celebration of the liturgical ceremonies unless it harmonized with it. And it was for that reason that soon, in 1893, at the time when Perosi completed his training and was about to manifest his creative gifts, Bishop Sarto, having become Patriarch of Venice and a cardinal, sent him to Solesmes for a lengthy and fruitful period of study,<sup>4</sup> where he wrote to him these lines, very moving today: "At the simple announcement of Vespers which you have heard sung by these venerable monks, you have caused to grow within me the desire to hear the Lord praised in a similar fashion in Italy, too. That will be a long wait, but I hope that I shall not die before tasting its fruit."

It is much easier to follow the thought of Cardinal Sarto regarding Gregorian chant from the time of his patriarchate at Venice. Written documents are abundant from that time as well as evidence collected later by biographers and the Postulation of his cause. Here are some facts collected by

1. *Fernessole*, I, p. 77, citing Daelli
2. *Dal-Gal*, p. 91; *Fernessole*, I, p. 96-97
3. *Fernessole*, I, p. 97
4. *Revue Gregorienne*, 1951, p. 144

Dr. Daelli:<sup>1</sup> "The lombard association of St. Gregory for the conservation of liturgical chant found in the cardinal a protector, and he was the restorer at Venice of Gregorian chant. He organized at St. Mark's (his cathedral) the alternation of Vespereal psalmody with voices of men and voices of children. He forbade the chant of the *Tantum ergo* to a theatrical air and the presence of women in the choirs as well as pianos and noisy instruments. The accepted opinion was that in the ceremonies of the Church the liturgy was only secondary and at the service of the music. In a pastoral letter of May 1, 1895, he protested against this principle: "Sacred music", he said, "simply forms a part of the liturgy and is its humble servant." It is for that reason, moreover, that Gregorian chant, official chant of the Church, is more particularly qualified to serve the liturgy to which it is intimately united.

In the course of his patriarchate a congress of music was held at Thiena to which he could not go himself.<sup>2</sup> He determined, however, to make known his directives through a letter to the Bishop of Padua, Msgr. Callegari: "What must be recommended is Gregorian chant and the means of making it popular. Oh, if I could arrive at having all the faithful sing the *Kyrie*, the *Gloria*, the *Credo*, the *Sanctus* and the *Agnus Dei*, as they sing the litanies and the *Tantum ergo*! For me that would be the most beautiful conquest of sacred music, for it is in truly taking part in the liturgy that they preserve their devotion . . . I prefer the *Tantum ergo*, the *Te Deum* and the litanies sung by the people to all polyphonic music!" And one will understand this readily in that in spite of the magnificent resources which the genius of Perosi offered him, he had always maintained the primacy of Gregorian chant. From the time of his arrival at Venice he instituted courses in Gregorian chant at the seminary which he gave to the care of a master of high esteem, Dom Magri, but we can say that the real director remained the patriarch himself.

1. *Fernessole*, I, p. 170

2. *Dal-Gal*, p. 189



Yet we must above all remember the capital document, that letter of May 1st, 1895, prototype of the *Motu Proprio* of 1903.<sup>1</sup> The *Gregorian Review* has already given some extracts in Vol. I, No. 4, P. 19-20. One will be pleased to re-read here some of the principal passages in a new translation. The cardinal fixes first of all the double end of sacred music:

“Music and the chant of the Church should correspond with the general end of the liturgy which is to honor God and edify the faithful; and to that special end which is to excite the faithful by means of melody to devotion and to dispose them to gather within themselves the fruits of grace which are proper to the holy mysteries solemnly celebrated.”

Then the cardinal underscores the qualities which must distinguish sacred music from profane music:

“Sacred music, by its intimate union with the liturgy and the liturgical text, should possess in the highest degree these virtues: *Holiness, Artistic Truth, Universality.*”

“The Church has always condemned that in the music which is light, vulgar, trivial, ridiculous, all that is profane and theatrical, either in the form of the composition or in the manner in which it is executed: *sancta sancte.*”

“She has always put to her use *true art*, by which she has merited so much from civilization, for it is by the beneficent influence of the Church that musical art has been gradually developed and brought to perfection throughout the centuries.

“Lastly, the Church is constantly concerned with the *universality* prescribed by her, according to that traditional principle that the law of believing is one and that the form of the prayer should also be one, and, insofar as possible, the norm of the chant.”

1. *Dal-Gal.*, p. 190-193.

And he concludes the exposition of these principles with these words: "Based on these solid rules, the Church has created the double form of its chant: Gregorian, which has lasted about a millenium, and classic Roman polyphony, of which Palestrina was the initiator in the XVI century."

Passing to practical applications, the Patriarch, by a long series of very precise prescriptions, prohibits profane music in the cult under pain of severe canonical sanctions and restores to it the true music of the Church. He desires that, in every parish, a school of Gregorian chant be established in order that the people may participate in an active manner in the liturgical ceremonies. It is one of the aims which he pursues with the greatest tenacity. He refutes at length the classical objection, that the people no longer understand Gregorian chant.<sup>1</sup> The people, he answered, should be trained and instructed. Moreover, the word *people* is abused. The people, more earnest than thought to be, appreciate sacred music and do not refrain from frequenting the churches in which it is in honor.

Two memorable occasions permitted the Patriarch to bring his doctrine to triumph in a brilliant manner: which, he noted joyously, "the faithful have listened with enthusiasm to Gregorian chant over the course of four days," and the Eucharistic Congress of 1897 when the polyphony of Perosi was discovered. Father Dal-Gal is right in saying that to Cardinal Sarto "belongs the honor of a reform which has taken a great place in the religious life of the Christian populace."<sup>2</sup> He was, in fact, the first to occupy himself in an efficacious manner with the renovation of sacred chant, and the first to have given it a complete doctrine, principles and practical applications.

When he was elevated to the Sovereign Pontificate, one can say that he found the question untouched. The only document recently set forth at that time by the Congregation of Rites, the decree on the norms of sacred music of July 6,

1. *Dal-Gal.*, p. 189, note 3, and p. 190

2. *Dal-Gal.*, p. 190

1894, moreover probably inspired by a memoir of Bishop Sarto, had had no widespread effect. But, one can imagine without much difficulty that Pius X was ready. Elected in the month of August, as early as the month of November he proposed to the whole Church the very program which he had brought to good results in the patriarchate of Venice. And all the decisive acts followed, the famous Mass of St. Gregory in 1904, the constitution of the Commission which was to correct and reedit the gradual, antiphonary and all the books of chant of the Roman Church, the encouragements given to the monks of Solesmes, the insertion in the Code of Canon Law then, in elaboration of canon 1264 and section 2 of canon 1365, lastly that vigorous impulsion whose effects are yet felt and which merits for Saint Pius X consideration as a new Gregory the Great.



## KYRIE IX

by Dom Joseph Gajard

Mass IX is one of the best known masses and one of the most frequently used by parochial scholae. In fact, Gregorian in cast without anything too austere, of a very pronounced musical line, it is very "melodious" and for that reason accessible to all and relatively easy. This is without taking into account the fact that its affectation for the feasts of the Blessed Virgin confer on it one more support in the favor of the faithful.

The *Kyrie*, called *Cum Jubilo*, of the mode of *re*, is nothing but the development of a simpler melody which the Vatican edition has preserved and designated in an equal fashion to the feasts of the Blessed Virgin: *Kyrie X*, called *Alme Pater*. It is quite clearly in fact, in both instances, the same themes, more or less developed, and the same composition — I mean to say the same architectural alignment of the fundamental themes. Also, the reflections which follow could just as well be, and perhaps even more easily be applied to *Kyrie X*, as the article of Dom Moquéreau (*Revue Gregorienne*, 1912, p. 50-56) shows, of which this is nothing more than a reprise and a sort of development. Many indeed are the Gregorianists who prefer *Kyrie X*, which is of a more sober line and which they deem to be more interior in feeling. It is a question of personal preferences . . .

What is certain in this matter is that, although *Kyrie X* is of a more simple and purer formation, easier to arrange in a synoptic table (which is a mark of authenticity), *Kyrie IX*, in its development, presents no awkwardness, no weighty passages, no redundance, no frivolities which are sometimes

found in analogous cases. It remains very firm, very dignified, and it too, very beautiful, in sum, not too far below the original. It can be admitted, if you will, that it is perhaps better suited to solemn feasts and the other version to lesser ones. In any case, both deserve to be extensively used in the Office.


## I. THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL THEMES

Its structure is simple: two themes, the melody of the *Kyrie* in the low register and that of the *Christe*, sung out on the fifth above the tonic, respectively, whose supple and harmonious combination, always natural, will give birth to a composition of a very beautiful final proportion, expressive, extending itself without effort over the whole normal ambitus of the mode of *re*, plagal and authentic, from the lower fourth *la* to the upper octave of the tonic *re*, in other words, the interval of an eleventh. Once again, with very limited means, and without the aid of any outside means, the composer has succeeded in creating a work of true artistic value.

Let us take a moment to look at the two themes; once they are well-defined, their structure and their interpretation, all the rest will be easy.


The first restricts itself to the lower register; the second is sung at the fifth above the tonic:

Theme I



Ky-ri- e      e- lé- i- son

Theme II



Christe.      e- lé- i- son

Theme I. *Kyrie Eleison*

In this we can distinguish two parts: the intonation and the cadence, marked by each of the two words of the invocation.

In which of the two must one place the *climacus resupinus*, *fa-re-do-re*, in the middle? In attributing it to the word *Kyrie* the Vatican edition seems to make as it were a prolongation of the intonation and attach it to the first melodic incise; but in placing the asterisk after the clivis *mi-re*, it seems to make it, on the contrary, the beginning of the second incise . . . In reality, the question is a bit pointless. It is known that in the middle ages, when two words followed each other, the second beginning with the vowel which ends the first, the scribes had the habit of not repeating this vowel. They wrote it only once and grouped above it all the notes which are effectively sung on it up to the following syllable. Briefly, they did not write *Ky-ri-e/e-le-i-son*, but *Ky-ri-e. . . le-i-son*. They did not distinguish the two words one from the other. This is an indication for us that there is no obligation in singing the *Kyrie* to make a break in the material sense between the two words as certain choirs imagine they must do; it is perfectly permissible to unite the two in the legato and continuity of a single musical phrase. In this article, for the convenience of the exposition, and precisely because, musically, there clearly seems to be a little cadence on the clivis *mi-re* and a re-launching on the *climacus*, I assign it for practical purposes to the second incise.

Thus, two incisives, intimately linked one to the other, making, so to speak, a single unit, as we shall see in the following pages. Begun from the tonic, the melody rises gently to the fifth, only to redescend immediately by stepwise motion to *re*, on which the second part of the theme is articulated, where a double fluctuation on the low sub-tonic prepares the tonic accent of *eleison*, lifted up lightly by a *podatus* on the third, followed by a falling back to the tonic. — It is a very simple and well-balanced movement, assuring the hierarchy of the two incisives while in preserving for each of them its



own accentuation and its autonomy and at the same time for the melodic line its beautiful flow. It is a movement, moreover, full of recollection and peace, very characteristic in that wise of the mode of *re*.

For the interpretation, it will suffice to respect the architecture of the phrase, in giving to the second incise, placed under the dependancy of the first, a little less intensity. Let me be permitted, however, some practical advice concerning the style which may not be without importance:

a) Although the two podatus of *Ky* are clearly arsie and in an ascending line, it is permissible, I think, to consider that there is here not so much a succession of two aris, but a single arsis, given out by the tonic accent, but which, instead of expanding itself in a single impulse, doubles itself, so to speak. In this manner one should spare a new intensive attack on the podatus *sol-la*, which would only weigh down the rising line. There will be only a single impulse, the initial elan, occasioned by the arsis of the tonic accent, whose dynamism will lift up the second compound beats. The whole thereby gains in life and lightness. As for the chironomy, it would be advantageous to make only one large arsis with the forearm, leaving to the wrist or the fingers the care of sketching the second.

b) For the union of the two incises one should not give the *fa* of the climacus resupinus the value of a new beginning by striking it bluntly. Rather, one should lead to it adroitly with a light crescendo on the preceding *re* (first taken quietly as a final, of course), in such a manner that the voice, in attacking the *fa*, should be at the desired intensive level and that the *fa* should only be the continuation of the movement already begun.

c) One should take care also not to give a material quality to the tonic accent of *eleison* with uncalculated force. One should take advantage of the double fluctuation on the low *do-re-do-re* which seems to be there only for this, to prepare the accent in this case, too, and to lead to it by a light

and supple crescendo which thins out its vigor. The accent will then be what it really is and what one is too often prone to forget, that is, the blossoming of an elan, a soft and spiritual force, *anima vocis*.

d) One should treat as a passing note the *sol* of this podatus, second note of the compound beat. Too often it is stressed and reenforced and thus produces an effect of syn-copation.

These are delicate nuances, no doubt, but on them depends to a great extent, as always, the artistic and religious value of sung prayer.

## Theme II. *Christe Eleison*

It is composed, like the first, of two incises, intimately linked in this instance, too. It attacks the fifth directly from the preceding final, unfolds itself there and there establishes its cadence, thus converting the dominant to a temporary tonic, albeit somewhat equivocal, having the aspect, thanks to the B flat, of protus and deuterus simultaneously. It is a cadence in suspense, giving the impression of something incomplete, and, on the other hand, giving the very clear impression of an invocation with its sharp attack of the fifth and the manifest impulsion of the podatus on the third *sol-B flat*, leading by a modulation to the cadence in deuterus. After the recollective prayer of the Kyrie, this is a supplication which arises, ardent, and which is to be accentuated by what follows, thanks to precisely the support which the melody will make of this theme on *la*, a veritable tremplin for the higher developments.

As for the interpretation, there is no difficulty. The accent of *Christe* will be made well as the upbeat, that is to say, in spite of the leap of a fifth, soft, broadened, without hardness. One should lead the clivis *la-sol* in a light crescendo toward the B flat of the climacus, taken softly, and one should lift up well the podatus of *le*, well stressed on its first note, the second being only a passing note in the penumbra of the first.

All these general nuances of execution of the two themes should be observed, naturally, each time that one or another of them presents itself in the development of the piece, made of nothing more than their successive interplay. There will be nothing to add but the nuances of detail which will fall into their respective places in the sonorous synthesis.

## II. GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE PIECE

### I. *The disposition of these themes in each of the nine invocations.*

- a) The *Kyries* of the beginning are made only of theme I: A-C, the second admitting only at the intonation a slight variant in the lower register, B-C.
- b) The three *Christes* alternate the two themes: the first and the third having the theme II, D-E, whereas the second returns to theme I, A-C, barely modified.
- c) The *Kyries* of the end are more animated, and *combine* the two themes:
  - the first combines the variant B of theme I, taken up at the upper octave, with theme II, slightly modified, B<sup>2</sup>, D<sup>2</sup>, E;
  - the second comes back simply to theme I, A<sup>3</sup>-C;
  - the third reproduces the first, contracting theme II somewhat, and after repetition, closes with theme I.

Thus the two themes live first of all their independent lives (it will be noted that the *Kyries* of the beginning and the *Christes* are written each wholly on one side of the line of demarcation), and finish by blending themselves, intermingling very naturally in a rising line up to the last *Kyrie*, which, stepping over the line of demarcation, unites both of them in a harmonious synthesis up to the high *re*, from which, by means of the cadence on *la* of theme II, the melody returns gradually to the low tonic to terminate as it began, in the repose and softness of the initial invocation.



II. *The constitutive elements of the synthesis*

This melodic enchainment, is it necessary to say it, does not proceed without certain retouchings of the themes used in order to permit them to be set into the synthesis without harshness, retouchings, moreover, rather slight, which alter nothing of their fundamental integrity.

Let us proceed by incisives, following the order of the columns of the table.

A) *Intonation of theme I.* — Always followed by its cadence C, it itself undergoes modifications in the second *Christe* and in the last two *Kyries*. In these, always following a cadence on *la*, it loses its first rising notes in order to be articulated directly to the cadence, a process which lets us suppose that the rise *re-fa-sol-la* is only a simple intonation without real importance in the architecture of the piece. As for the different grouping of the notes of the descending part, they are simply distributed according to the number of syllables, or, in the absence of the text, grouped in a single vocalise.

B) *Slight variant*, which forms something like an answer to the intonation A by simple inversion of the theme on the lower fourth; *re-fa-la/ la-do-re*. And this answer is to furnish the material of the beautiful development of the last *Kyrie* which carries it to the upper octave and thus arrives at setting forth the melody in its integrity.

C) *Cadence of theme I.* This incise is, so to speak, the principal and essential motif of the whole ensemble. The cadence of theme I, it will return perpetually, always unchanged as though to maintain, throughout all the developments, the basic unity of the piece. It is the only completely conclusive cadence, that of theme II being only provisional, as is obvious, and calling for something to follow, and it is on this cadence finally, as always preceded by its antecedent A, that the piece is to close, in peace.

# KYRIE IX

## SCHEMAS

THEME I			THEME II		SCHEMAS
A	B	C	D	E	
Ký-ri-e		(e) e-lé-i-son			A-C
Ký-ri-e	Kýri-e	(e) e-lé-i-son			B-C
Ký-ri-e		(e) e-lé-i-son			A-C
			D	E	D-E
Chri- ste		(e) e-lé-i-son	Chri- ste	e-lé-i-son	A <sup>2</sup> -C
			D	E	D-E
	B <sup>2</sup>		Chri- ste	e-lé-i-son	B <sup>2</sup> -D <sup>2</sup> -E
Ký-ri-e...		(e) e-lé-i-son	(e)	e-lé-i-son	A <sup>3</sup> -C
Ký-ri-e	B <sup>2</sup>			D <sup>3</sup> -E <sup>2</sup>	B <sup>2</sup> -D <sup>3</sup> -E <sup>2</sup>
Kýri-e...	B <sup>3</sup>		(e)	D <sup>3</sup> -E <sup>2</sup>	B <sup>3</sup> -D <sup>3</sup> -E <sup>2</sup>
	(e)		(e)		A <sup>4</sup> -C
		(e) e-lé-i-son			

D) *Intonation of theme II.* — Like the intonation A of the first theme, it loses its initial note when, in the first and third *Kyries* of the last passage, it is approached from a higher incise (in the occurrence of the reprise of B at the octave), which gives it its point of departure ( $D^2$  and  $D^3$ ).

E) *Cadence of theme II*, invariably linked to the intonation D, which it always completes, even when, in the very last *Kyrie*, it must, in default of text, be gathered, contracted, to unite itself to this intonation and preserve the essentials of the line. It is on this cadence, as on a fulcrum, that the great elan of the last *Kyries* toward the upper *re* is ordinarily supported. It is thus, as it were, the link of articulation of the whole second part of the piece.

### III. *The constant melodic rise of the general line*

The *Kyries* of the beginning remain within the modal fifth *re-la*, overlapping even into the low register in the second invocation, and conclude on the tonic.

The *Christes*, save for the second one, which takes up again the first theme, establish themselves, recitation and cadence, on the fifth, on *la*.

The last *Kyries*, save for the second one, which itself is also enclosed in theme I, become bolder, and bracing themselves on the *la* of the preceding cadence, rise to high *re*, are suspended there for an instant, before coming to rest, firstly on the cadence on *la* of *Christe*, and finally, on the lower tonic, artfully led to by the reprise of the whole melody of theme I.

Thus the line rises without stopping, as, moreover, in most of the *Kyries*, and no doubt there is not only here a question of musical composition; we must see also and above all the increase of suppliant prayer and confidence in God. This rise, of course, should be felt in the chant which should be carried along in crescendo from the first to the very last invocation.



This is not, however, according to a material and rigid line. As always, the intensity should be calculated in regard for the melody, and a simple glance at the table shows that, in each group of invocations, the second is in the lower register, as though to mark a time of repose and to spare one's forces, exactly as the climbing of a mountain is made in successive "legs", with, at each instant, little plateaus to rest the lower leg muscles and give them more suppleness. The Church is a mother and does not want to tire her children! The general crescendo is thus accommodated to these slight but *relative* decrescendos, and it is on each of the *eleisons* that the intensive reprise is made in order to lead on to what follows.

### III. THE INTERPRETATION

We are now sufficiently informed to be able to fix the rules of interpretation. It should obviously take account of all the elements which we have just patiently analysed and which we have precisely analysed in this detail only for the purpose of clarifying the practice.

There is no need to return to the nuances enumerated above in the study of the two fundamental themes; we suppose them to be admitted, and they should always be reproduced with the return of each theme itself. Thus nothing more remains but to call attention to those which arise from the development of the melodic line. Dom Mocquereau having done this with great success for *Kyrie X*, in the article mentioned above, may I be permitted to simply cite it at this point, only too glad to take shelter under his authority. Please consider as being his everything which is hereafter placed in quotation marks.

The first *Kyrie*, entirely in the middle range, is to be sung with a soft voice, lightly, but without hurrying.

The second *Kyrie* will have its low intonation a little less strong, and will be characterized by a semblance of repose, with, however, a little crescendo up to the accent of *eleison*.

The third *Kyrie* "like the first, but, in the ensemble, with a bit more brilliance, or better, a little less softness. It should serve as a transition between the second and the fourth invocation, and it will thus take up again the crescendo at the point at which the second invocation had left it, and will herald, with a less pronounced decrescendo, the *forte* of the first *Christe*".

The first *Christe*, which is established at the fifth and, by a modulation which is, by the way, imprecise, is to remain in the high register, demands obviously more power.

The second, completely in repose, in decrescendo, except for the *eleison* which, as has just been said for the third *Kyrie*, should prepare the intonation of the third *Christe*.

The third *Christe* like the first, "but with more power in all its course, in order to prepare the brightness" of the following *Kyrie*, which is to carry us in a bound to the octave above the tonic.

The first *Kyrie* of the last section, "a brilliant and vigorous attack, but always without harshness, a voice both full and soft at the same time. In Gregorian chant suppleness and softness must never be separated from vigor. Everything which has gone before should have progressively given a feeling of anticipation of this explosion of the supplication. Then comes a slow decrease of intensity up to the end", save for the slight rise of *eleison*.

The next-to-last *Kyrie* "should be the natural continuation, melodically and rhythmically, of the preceding invocation. Above all, let there be no contrast between these two phrases. The Gregorian cantilena is the arch-antagonist of preciousness and affectation; it would be affectation of poor taste to sing the seventh invocation fortissimo and the eighth pianissimo".

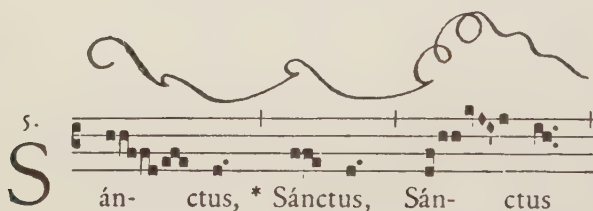
The last *Kyrie*, like the first of this series, has, however, yet more power. It is pointless to note that the repetition of

the motif B<sup>2</sup>E<sup>2</sup> should in no wise be conducted as in echo, a process forbidden in Gregorian chant. Just the opposite, the disappearance of the final syllables *ri-e* and their replacement by a pure vocalise permits us to draw the crescendo up to that point, on the condition, however, that the dotted *re* be attained softly, without any harshness, even should it be — something which is not forbidden — that the two choirs come together here in order to give more power to the supplication. Then it will be in a progressive decrescendo that one will drop down toward the final cadence, broadening somewhat the last descent which follows the two asterisks, in such a way as to give the final *eleison* a maximum of breadth and vocal sonority, while at the same time absolutely serenity.

## SANCTUS IX

by Sister Leonie de Jesus

Ordinary IX is, without doubt, more difficult to teach to a schola than others like it of more skeletal, more linear character, but the result amply repays the efforts which one devotes to it, for it is very "harmonious" in all its parts, whether it be a question of the *Kyrie* in its such progressive blossoming forth, of the *Gloria*, one of the most "triumphant", of the *Agnus Dei* whose melody is of similar cast to that of the Hymn of Joy of Beethoven, or of the *Sanctus*, lastly, so very enthusiastic, the chironomy of which we are studying briefly.

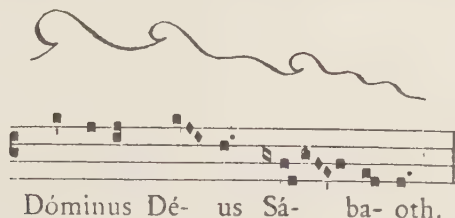


From the beginning the succession *do-la-fa* sets forth the melodic cell which the piece will exploit from this point in all its meanings: a vigorous arsis will open this descent, on the first pressus, which one should let flow effortlessly towards the *fa* tonic, lightly raising the torculus *sol-la-sol* without giving it the quality of impulse of the first arsis. This last arsis rise is ranked below the arsis of the pole and remains subject to it.

Second *Sanctus*: Melodic form and literary form coincide perfectly. There is no difficulty with the chironomy. The initial arsis will be more moderate than the preceding one. The route is shorter.



Third *Sanctus*: Three very active arsis to sweep over the modal octave *fa-do-fa*. And above all, let us not, under pretext that the *do* is a long note, place there a thesis which would break up all the forward energy of this *Sanctus*. Three theses will suffice to absorb all this effort.



*Dominus Deus*: Perfect superposition of the text and melody.

*Sabaoth*: Let us follow, on the syllable *Sa*, the trend of the melody in adopting a thesis on the clivis *la-fa*. An arsis rise on the B flat will convey the melodic renewal and will permit the accurate placement of the cadence.

*Pleni sunt*: One beat of silence will complete the first compound beat and establish the distinction between the two phrases. Let us not neglect these silences. They have, as in all music, their role to play. To neglect them or to sacrifice them would be to run the risk of compromising the structure of the ensemble — let us say the architecture — of the piece. We begin with an arsis — obviously — without which we could not explain the movement of the phrase. Then, let us align the text rhythmically without difficulty in a series of theses, while maintaining the movement — drawn upward as it were — toward the melodic summit of terra, itself subject, on the level of the member of a phrase, to the melodic summit of the raised up accent of *gloria* (note further on). The highest note *fa* should float with breadth over all this phrase which has striven entirely toward it.<sup>1</sup> From that point everything

1. Experience authorizes drawing the attention to the need for carefully controlling the count of the ternary compound beat formed by the pressus and the liquescent. Too often this ternary beat slides into the dotted punctum by transforming itself into a binary beat, thus upsetting the movement.

returns tranquilly to calmness, outlining almost without modification the major scale of *fa*. *Tua* could be, strictly speaking, taken in thesis, particularly if the preceding ascending movement has been vigorous enough. The arsis should in any case be discreet and bring out only the weak melodic rise, which is not without expressive value.



Pléni sunt caéli et tér- ra gló-ri- a tú- a. Hosánna in excél- sis.

*Hosanna*: Without hurrying, launch an arsis on the torculus, whose brightness, tempered, should not supplant that of the rise *terra-gloria*.

On *in*, in the thesis, we compensate for the intensity, already thinned out, on *na*, and we use only a weak arsis on the torculus, for the primary purpose of organizing the cadence.



Be- nedictus qui vé- nit in nó- mi-ne Dó- mi-ni.

*Benedictus*: The rhythm molds the melody without constraint.

*Qui venit*: We could have a thesis on the relative *qui*; the swinging back and forth on *fa-mi-re-do-re-mi-fa-mi-re-do* would be calm.

*In nomine*: This culminating *fa* brings on anew the long descent already met with (We shall return shortly to this special case of culminating note in a thetic compound beat already encountered on *terra-gloria*).

*Hosanna*: One silent compound beat will prepare us for the *Hosanna* which recapitulates the whole melodic structure of the piece. Following the course of the melody, we shall be able to adopt the indicated chironomic line. The dotted virga will serve us as a respite before the final effort of the summit (*sanna*), itself subject — as the case is presented at *terra-gloria* — to the culminating *fa* of *in*. The torculus *la-do-la* will require obviously an arsis. The last torculus will be thetic.



This *Sanctus* presents in three instances what it is proper to call with Dom Gajard, the case of the *rising thesis*: *gloria*, *in nomine*, *in excelsis*. The compound beat to which the culminating *fa* belongs is, beyond any doubt, thetic. But this *fa* has risen to an interval too important for one to deny it the role of pole, of apex of the whole phrase. How should this important function be rendered in the chironomic gesture? It seems that the simple raising of the hand on the third count is not sufficient, although correct; it does not adequately suggest the flight of the note nor its centrally magnetic character.(1)



It is possible to bring the hand back quickly to the left after the thesis, in order to outline in the fashion of a figure 8, the uplifting of this third count.(2)

## GREGORIAN REVIEW

Dom Gajard proposes, adopting the expression *rising thesis*, that at the very moment when the hand places the thesis (here on the syllables *ra*, *nit* and *na*), one should continue to make it descend to the point that it fades away at the bottom of a large curve, from which it will reappear at the summit of a circle where this third culminating beat will sail forth.(3)



# NOTES on GREGORIAN TECHNIQUE and STYLE

by J. Robert Carroll

During the 1954 National Summer Session of the Gregorian Institute of America at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota, experience with a large and widely representative group of chant students and choirmasters daily in the classrooms, in addition to informal comments of Dom Desroquettes, O.S.B., and Dom Cuthbert Soukop, O.S.B., both of whom carried the greater portion of the teaching of chant during the session, impel me to sketch in the form of this short article a number of points about which many persons, even chant teachers and specialists, are often confused and even uninformed.

To often do we think of technique applied to Gregorian chant as a reading facility — a fluency in reproducing intervals and rhythm. In fact, however, technique involves the total means of conveying the fundamentals and style of Gregorian chant to others, either in the classroom or the choirloft, and, to put it accurately, both verbal precision and masterly conducting are vital to the complete technique of the chant.

It is very difficult to speak, on one hand, of the pure mechanics of the "motor rhythm" or, on the other hand, of style without intermingling aspects of both. Nothing is more detrimental to the acquisition of mastery in chant than the treatment of rhythmic as a dry and lifeless abstraction, yet one cannot teach the subtleties of good style without presupposing a solid grounding in the mechanics of rhythm. Nevertheless, style is concerned at every step with the onward

progress of the rhythmic current, and thus is rendered less clear to the extent that it is divorced from the elementary technique of movement.

In the light of the above remarks, I have thought it expedient to discuss the main points of the errors which I have observed this summer, not categorically, but in the order which they seemed to take by frequency and universally.

### Regularity of the indivisible time unit

Most generally ensconced as a bad habit, very difficult to uproot, is the tendency to vary the duration of the indivisible time unit which may be represented in chant by the isolated punctum. In three different manifestations of this error, all stemming, however, from this same basic technical failure, the relationship between identical single notes at various times would amount to a ratio of two or even three to one, *in the short span of a single piece*. These errors may be listed as: 1) irregularity of the length of notes in chants from both Ordinary and Proper of the Mass, 2) irregularity of the notes in psalmodic recitation, and 3) loss of distinction in length between ternary and binary groupings, that is to say, the compound beats.

The great difficulty for those whose training and experience have been irregular is the mastery of quiet, tranquil movement. The average student, in chant as in general music, has a tendency born of eagerness and exaggerated effort to hurry the established tempo. This is most apparent in group reading. When an entire group falters on intervals, ictus or ensemble, the primary stumbling block, other than technical inadequacy, may often be a subtle acceleration which makes reading increasingly more difficult. This habit of "creeping up" on the tempo becomes a part of every performance and causes great disparity of tempos from one part of a phrase or member to another. Often the initial tempo, a comfortable or even rather slow pace in many choirs, is gradually increased to the point at which anything like a gentle final cadence is out of the question.

The ramifications of this habit of hurrying are many, but the most destructive to musicality is the elision or extreme shortening of the note or count immediately preceding the ictus, particularly when it is the third count of a ternary compound beat. It frequently approaches a staccato treatment and is carelessly passed over in the preoccupation of securing a firm tone on the following ictus. Quite often the first reading of a piece is so irregular as to be obvious to even the most inexperienced of the singers, but the precise cause of the irregularity is rarely noted. In fact, the opposite of the true focal point of the difficulty is usually mistakenly thought to be the element in error, namely the seemingly excessive length of the notes which occur on the ictus. This false illusion of length, as the reader can readily anticipate from the exposition thus far, is a relative affair, the product of negligence and slighting of the non-ictic notes, a process which by comparative listening makes the ictic notes seem much too long.

An example may serve to illustrate this point. The Communion *Semel juravi* is filled with typical passages, the best being the second member of the third phrase, *et sicut luna*, etc.



Here the notes on the syllables *sic* and *lu* are nearly always treated with exaggerated shortness by inattentive singers and conductors. The end result is that the adjustment of tempo to the following notes is impossible. Thus, in a running account, the first two notes on *et* are in regular proportion, the *sic* is snapped off abruptly, forcing the singers to accelerate the tempo of the two notes of *ut* to match this brevity of duration. When the same abrupt treatment is then applied to *lu*, the speed of the torculus on *na* is consequently advanced still more. The downfall of this careless accelerando comes when the duple compound beats of *perfecta*

are forced either to race on at a now ridiculous pace or to break the tempo completely in an attempt to regain the original tempo. Usually the latter choice is made, sometimes—and this is the *bete noire* of the teacher—without conscious realization of the occurrence of anything of the sort taking place.

This is not the end of the matter, however, for the last incise of the piece contains similar structures, and unless the choirmaster understands the peculiar problem of the subtle and destructive tendency to shorten the third count of ternary beats, he will never achieve better than an awkward compromise at this cadence.

Psalmody offers this same problem, plus others peculiar to its form. We may include in our observations under this heading most *recto tono* recitations, short verses and responses, the singing of the Preface, etc., as these all depend on syllabic chanting, the crux of the matter being considered.

The lack of obvious melodic individuality often gives rise to the all-too-popular notion that in simple recitation the text is the only consideration, and this from the aspect of *conversational style*. Conversational style implies, of course, in its better manifestations, an expressive and varied treatment of the text, including sharp changes in tone, tempo, power, etc. Naturally, such variation precludes a consistent rhythmic unit, and in conversation, this is as it should be.

In oratory, while great variations are possible, it is not practical to duplicate the extremes common to conversation, as from the listener's viewpoint, clarity suffers. Still more limited are the practical extremes of good singing diction, as musical order, clear declamation and good tone modify the situation yet more strictly. Nevertheless, how many performances of psalmody, and worse still, solo recitations of the Celebrant, are based wholly on conversational norms of textual treatment!

For those who make no attempt to follow a musical plan,



nothing can be said. For them, machine-gun-like recitation with its resulting obliteration of the word accent and "swallowing" of syllables will be the only standard. Unfortunately, such procedures have held wide sway in this country, even in recent years, and those who study chant formally are sometimes influenced by this often heard "style," if such it may be called. The tempo of most psalmody as heard in seminaries, convents and parishes is, moreover, too rapid to begin with. Although a tempo slightly more rapid than that of neumatic chant is quite workable, any marked divergence from the tempo of normal chant is to be avoided. A comfortable tempo permits good tone production and syllabic equality, whereas too rapid a tempo makes it very difficult for the singers to calculate and prepare the rhythmic divisions.

The third point touched on above, the loss of distinction between binary and ternary compound beats, is the plague of even the finest choirs. The well-known antiphon *Hic vir* of a Confessor not a Bishop (Magnificat) is a case in point.

At Magn.  
Ant. 8. G

h IC vir, despí-ci-ens mún-dum \* et terréna,  
tri-úm-phans, di-ví-ti-as caé-lo cón-di-dit ó-re, mánu.

A running account will show up the difficulties: Single non-ictic note on *Hic*, very little chance of overshortening because of the necessity to taking the ensemble tempo from the beginning. *Vir, des-*, tendency to slight third count on *des-*; *pi-ci-ens* is less subject to this tendency due to articulation time necessary for final consonants. *Mun-* approaches the effect of a ternary group because of the effect of length produced by the episema. The syllable *dum* has a dangerous tendency to become a three-count group, as the dotted punctum may be unduly lengthened by analogy of the groups surrounding it. It is, moreover, the last beat of the incise,

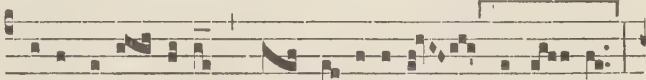
and this may, in the case of inexperienced choirs, suggest a phrasing which exaggerates this division. *Et terre-* may be hurried, the last syllable on the third count slighted. This will be obvious at the clivis on *na*, as the latter will either be treated at a slower pace, an attempt to adjust its length to equal the duration of the preceding ternary beat, or be permitted to rush on at the hurried tempo. *Triumphans* consists of two duple beats. These are not likely to suffer from inequalities of duration, but may be sung too rapidly. *Divitias* should be well-measured, similar in structure to the two preceding beats. The entire word *caelo* offers an example of possible errors which should be noted. The first syllable may be hurried in an attempt to adapt its ternary count to the length of the preceding duple beats, the third count elided to permit a feeling of regular measure, the very thing which must be avoided; *-lo* may then be taken so quickly that the horizontal episema suddenly seems to arrest the movement, something which is not consistent with Gregorian style and not supported by the punctuation. *Condidit* has a tendency to be rushed, then the same for *ore*, the last syllable being greatly shortened. *Manu* will probably be taken awkwardly and too rapidly if the preceding tendencies occur in practice as described.

We may sum up this point of discussion by saying that the major difficulty lies in the inability to sing a succession of two and three-note groups while maintaining a fixed basic duration for the single note, that is to say, when the ictuses are not equally spaced one from another. The tendency is to force the ictuses into an equidistant relationship, lengthening the duple groups and shortening the ternary—a sort of duplet-triplet affair such as is found in modern measured music. Counting is the solution to this problem, even use of a metronome where necessary.

It is an unfortunate circumstance that we are obliged to talk so much of the ictus in teaching chant, for an exaggerated sense of its importance soon develops. Let us not imply that it is not of very great, very real importance, but we must

recognize that inexperienced singers—and experienced inattentive ones—become obsessed with the search for the ictus, passing over many notes of more *expressive* importance in order to determine these reference points.

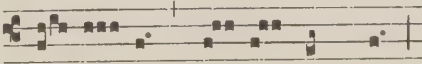
What are these non-ictic notes of expressive importance? Firstly, they are the tonic accents which occur at points not coinciding with the ictus. In the group below, the accent of *Domine* occurs on the non-ictic note preceding the formula,

Comm. 4.   
**F** Eci judí- ci-um \* et justí-ti-am, Dómi- ne,

very common in deuterus. To treat it with less intensity, transferring this intensity to the following ictic note, would be a stylistic error, and the true solution is this: the note is broadened almost imperceptibly, the tonic accent receiving its quality of impulse, elan, very slightly intense, and the following ictus is sung *more softly* than the accented note, moving smoothly and without weightiness, into the rest of the formula. The soft notes must not be hurried.

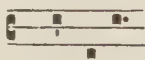
We can readily see that, at least as often as not, intensity is not to be construed as being a quality of the ictus. Often the ictus is much softer than the non-ictic note which precedes it, and the ictus makes itself felt only through the sense of order and orientation which it produces when realized by the singers.

The other major stylistic error is related to the above, but much more subtle in its manifestations. Single non-ictic notes which occur before long notes, particularly when they precede a leap to the long note, are often sung too quickly. The *locus classicus* for such instances is the Introit *Dominus dixit ad me*:

Intr. 2.   
**D** O-mi- nus \* dí- xit ad me :

On the word *dixit* there occur two similar groupings, punctum-distropha, punctum-distropha. All too often the punctum is sung slightly, the distropha given a definite quality of intensity. In reality, the low punctum should be broadened slightly, the distropha attacked *softly*. The voice, in other words, should not leap quickly across the interval of a third, but should draw back, as it were, taking the leap in a relaxed and unhurried fashion, slightly "stretching" the punctum to give it the feeling one can detect in the note played by a violinist just before he is to play a chord. In order to rearrange his fingers and allow the chord time to sound, he must broaden the note before this chord, then attack the chord unhurriedly with as full a bowing as possible. This unhurried, almost delayed attack, with its note of preparation, is a good model for Gregorianists to observe.

A splendid example of the combination of the two above principles, accented non-ictic note, and the leap of an interval to a long note, may be found in the Gloria for Mass IX:



Qui sédes

If the musician has understood the foregoing discussion, the present problem is obvious. The *se-* must not be slighted, and the dotted punctum on *des* must be sung lightly, without note. The non-ictic note itself must be allowed time to "prepare" the leap, a slight broadening serving this purpose. intensity, even more softly than the preceding low non-ictic

We must emphasize in closing that an understanding of the Solesmes method, which exists generally today, is not enough for good or even merely creditable singing. Attention to technical details and understanding of stylistic principles are vital to that approach to perfection which must be the goal of the church musician.



## THE BOSTON AFFILIATION OF THE GREGORIAN INSTITUTE

Beginning with the academic year 1954-55, a special affiliation of the Gregorian Institute of America with the New England Conservatory of Music in cooperation with Emmanuel College will make it possible for students of organ, church music, historical research and related fields to earn credit toward the Diploma of Higher Gregorian Studies of the world-renowned Gregorian Institute of Paris while pursuing regular resident study at Boston.

The Gregorian Institute of Paris was established under the direct supervision of Solesmes on November 7, 1923. From the beginning it was privileged to have as its professor of advanced chant, Dom Joseph Gajard, O.S.B., of Solesmes, now the choirmaster of the famous abbey. The Institute has always maintained this intimate contact with Solesmes, and as the Benedictines gradually assumed a less active role in teaching chant throughout France and neighboring nations, in accord with their cloistered tradition, the Gregorian Institute of Paris was given this responsibility. On the faculty in recent years, have been many illustrious personalities in the field of church music, Joseph Bonnet, Henri Potiron and the present director, Auguste Le Guennant, to mention only a few.

Although much good was accomplished through the teaching done at Paris, it eventually became apparent that a more active apostolate was needed, and the Gregorian Institute of Paris began to establish regional schools under its jurisdiction all over France. This policy was carried into

other countries after the close of World War II, including Hungary, Portugal, Switzerland and Brazil. In 1953 initial arrangements were undertaken for a similar extension to the United States, the Gregorian Institute of America being the proposed custodian of the Paris Charter. The affiliation now being carried out in Boston is the fruit of this academic relationship.

The significance of this affiliation cannot be overestimated. This is the only such academic arrangement to be established under the terms of the charter granted by the Paris Institute to the Gregorian Institute of America. Through this international arrangement the Gregorian Institute of America is authorized to teach the Paris courses and to select other regional centers which offer facilities adequate for the duplication of the high standards required by the Paris administration.

Boston has been selected as the first such center, largely because of the established international reputation of the New England Conservatory and the feasibility of close cooperation with Emmanuel College, the oldest Catholic college for women in New England. It is believed that the four-way cooperation of the New England Conservatory, Emmanuel College, the Gregorian Institute of America and the Gregorian Institute of Paris is unique in the history of church music education. The extensive facilities which are thus brought to the service of the student of church music resident in the Boston area are unprecedented in scope.

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